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Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 8 of Security Council resolution 1935 (2010), by which the Council requested me to report every 90 days on progress made towards implementing the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The report includes an assessment of progress made against benchmarks set out in annex II to my report to the Council of 16 November 2009 (S/2009/592), as well as the status of the political process, security and humanitarian situations, covering the period from 1 January to 31 March 2011.

II. Political developments

2. There has been some progress at the political level towards a negotiated resolution to the conflict and the launch of a Darfur-based political process.

3. The African Union-United Nations joint mediation continued consultations with the Government, armed movements and other Darfur stakeholders. On 29 January, the leaders of the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) issued a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to the Doha negotiations and noting their intention to work together in reaching a comprehensive settlement to the conflict. The delegation of the Government of the Sudan, which left Doha on 31 December 2010, has returned to the talks. On 15 February, the Joint Chief Mediator, Djibril Bassolé, met with the leader of JEM, Khalil Ibrahim, in Tripoli. The JEM leader advised that his movement's delegation in Doha had full authority to negotiate on behalf of the movement and confirmed that JEM was prepared to collaborate with LJM in negotiations with the Government.

4. On 17 February, the Joint Chief Mediator and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar held separate meetings with representatives of the Government of the Sudan, LJM and JEM to agree on the next steps in the negotiation process. It was agreed that the Mediator would provide the parties with a set of draft texts on each of the issues under negotiation, which together would serve as a framework for a final comprehensive agreement. Subsequently, JEM agreed to enter into direct talks with the Government.

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5. On 22 February, the joint mediation presented to the Government, LJM and JEM a set of draft texts covering four areas on which there is broad agreement, namely, wealth-sharing; compensation and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees; justice and reconciliation; and human rights and fundamental freedoms. All three parties have submitted to the mediation their positions on these texts, with no substantive disagreement. The parties are now considering and discussing the texts on power-sharing and security arrangements. The mediation plans thereafter to review the entire text in the light of the positions of the parties and, where there are divergences, to recommend compromise proposals. The mediation will hold an All Darfur Stakeholders Conference late in April to seek broad-based ownership for the Doha outcome and support for its implementation from the Darfurians and the international community.

6. On the issue of the administrative status of Darfur, the Special Adviser to the President, Ghazi Salah al-Din, announced on 2 March that the Government had decided to hold a referendum before 9 July 2011, the day South Sudan is scheduled to secede, in accordance with article 55 of the Darfur Peace Agreement, which requires the signatory parties to hold a referendum not later than 12 months after elections in Darfur. In addition, on 7 March, the Special Adviser issued a statement indicating that the Government had also decided to implement the recommendation of a High-level Committee for Darfur — established during the Sudan People's Initiative in Kenana in 2008 — to create two new States in Darfur, a central State with Zalingei as its capital and a state in the south-east with El Daein as its capital. On 29 March, a presidential decree was issued on the holding of the referendum, which stipulated that the National Electoral Commission would organize and supervise the process.

7. The announcements led JEM and LJM to briefly withdraw from the peace talks in March on the grounds that the Government's announcements constituted unilateral decisions taken on an issue that was under negotiation. Other armed movements, opposition political parties and several sectors of Darfuri civil society also reacted negatively to the announcements, stating that the conditions within Darfur are not conducive to the holding of a credible referendum. On 14 March, the Government issued a statement renewing its commitment to the negotiations in Doha, specifying that all issues, including the administrative status of Darfur, remained open for negotiation and that all provisions of an agreement reached in Doha will be fully implemented.

8. Accompanying the mediation's efforts, UNAMID continued to enhance awareness of, and popular support for, the peace process through the dissemination of information about the civil society conferences held in Doha. In this connection, a total of 10 workshops were convened in Northern and Western Darfur, during which information about the Doha Civil Society Declaration and Doha Civil Society Communiqué was disseminated to representatives of the native administration, internally displaced persons, women's associations, youth groups, teachers and national non-governmental organizations. On 27 January, UNAMID held consultations with leaders of internally displaced persons from Kalma and Otash camps in Southern Darfur, who expressed their support for the Doha peace process.

Darfur-based Political Process

9. In anticipation of the conclusion of the mediation efforts, preparations are under way for the next phase of the peace process, the Darfur-based Political Process. This will entail broad-based consultations with the people of Darfur on the agreement reached by the parties and seek to secure broad-based buy-in for its implementation. UNAMID has engaged extensively with the diplomatic community, regional organizations and Government representatives on the way forward. At a meeting held in Khartoum on 15 January, chaired by the head of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, and attended by the United States Special Envoy to the Sudan, Major General (retired) Scott Gration, Mr. Ghazi Salah al-Din and the UNAMID Joint Special Representative, Ibrahim Gambari, the role of the Darfur-based Political Process in the peace process was reaffirmed. In addition, the importance of establishing and maintaining an enabling environment necessary to protect the political and civil rights of participants was discussed.

10. At a meeting held on 8 February, the Joint Special Representative, representatives of the High-level Implementation Panel and the presidential Adviser agreed to constitute a Joint Security Committee comprising UNAMID personnel and senior Government military and security officials to discuss security conditions, including those necessary for the launch of the Darfur-based Political Process. The first meeting of the committee was scheduled for 27 March, but it was postponed, owing to the unavailability of key personnel. The committee anticipates meeting early in April. Meanwhile, the Government has indicated its willingness to lift emergency laws in effect in Darfur as a sign of its commitment to ensure the credibility of the Process.

11. On 18 February, UNAMID convened a third retreat for special envoys and major international actors in Nyala, Southern Darfur. The Special Envoys to the Sudan from China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, Haile Menkerios, the Deputy Joint Chief Mediator, Azouz Ennifar, and representatives of the United Nations country team attended the retreat. Representatives of the African Union, the League of Arab States, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden also participated in the retreat. Participants renewed their call for an inclusive Darfur peace process that would lead to comprehensive peace in the region, and called on all parties to immediately cease hostilities and allow unrestricted freedom of movement for UNAMID and humanitarian agencies to access populations in need of assistance. In the outcome document of the retreat, the participants agreed that the Darfur-based Political Process would enhance popular support for a peace agreement and better enable the people of Darfur to be involved in the implementation of the outcome of the Doha negotiations, while stressing that establishing an enabling environment for the Process was essential for the credibility of the initiative.

III. Security situation

12. Fighting between Government and movement forces continued to be a major source of insecurity in parts of Darfur. The incidence of intercommunal conflict

remained low. Attacks on UNAMID and humanitarian personnel were relatively few but were significant in their severity.

13. Relations between the Government and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)-Minni Minawi faction (SLA-Minni Minawi) remained strained. On 2 February, Minni Minawi issued a statement advising that the movement has withdrawn from the Darfur Peace Agreement and, on 20 February, Minni Minawi issued a warning advising that airports in the Sudan, and in Darfur in particular, had been designated potential military targets by his movement. The statement warned UNAMID and international organizations not to use any airport in the Sudan or risk being inadvertently attacked. UNAMID publicly condemned the announcement and secured Minni Minawi's commitment that the inviolability of mission and humanitarian personnel would be respected.

14. Fighting between Government and SLA-Minni Minawi forces in the Shangil Tobaya and Dar al Salam areas of Northern Darfur and Khor Abeche in Southern Darfur, which began in December 2010, continued throughout January and February. On 24 and 25 January, there was fighting between Government and SLA-Minni Minawi forces in Thabit. SLA-Minni Minawi forces, which were joined by elements of SLA-Abdul Wahid and LJM in a newly formed alliance known as SLA-Justice, attacked Government forces on 25 January in the villages of Thabit, Tukumare and Foula in Northern Darfur and ambushed a Government convoy on 15 February in Kabga, 45 km south-west of El Fasher. Some 80 Sudanese Armed Forces soldiers and 12 rebels were reportedly killed in the fighting, and 55 Sudanese Armed Forces soldiers were captured by the movements.

15. The Sudanese Armed Forces undertook air operations in Northern Darfur, including bombing the villages of Wadi Mura, Foula and Um Shisha from 15 to 19 February; Bersi and Samara near Sortony on 20 February; Kushiny on 23 February; and Aramba, Burgo, Rawanta and Awsajin from 24 to 25 February. In addition, Sudanese Armed Forces attacked the villages of Linda and Dabab on 23 February.

16. The SAF and JEM forces reportedly clashed near Sirba in Western Darfur on 11 January. On 28 January, Sudanese Armed Forces attacked SLA-Abdul Wahid forces in Sortony, Golo and Rockero, north-west of Jebel Marra. Two days later, SLA-Abdul Wahid forces attacked an armed forces position in Golo.

17. In related events, Government security agencies conducted a series of cordon and search operations in the Shangil Tobaya, Tawilla and Zam Zam camps of internally displaced persons, whose residents are mainly Zaghawa and considered supportive of SLA-Minni Minawi. The stated purpose of the operations was to find and remove unauthorized arms, ammunition and illicit drugs (see para. 33). Upon becoming aware that the searches were in progress, UNAMID immediately dispatched personnel to monitor proceedings and provide protection. They overcame some initial resistance from Government security forces to accessing the camps. The presence of UNAMID personnel in the camps deterred violence and, in the case of the operation at Shangil Tobaya on 26 January, led to the curtailment of the search.

Intercommunal conflict

18. The incidence of intercommunal fighting decreased, with six fatalities recorded. These were the result of a clash between armed groups of Misseriya and

Nawaiba in Terej market, Western Darfur, on 1 January, following a dispute over outstanding debt, which resulted in the death of one person (Nawaiba) and injury to four others (three Misseriya and one Nawaiba), and a clash between farmers and pastoralists near Sani Karo, Northern Darfur, on 22 February, which was triggered by allegations of livestock theft, that resulted in the deaths of five persons. UNAMID is continuing to work with community leaders to mitigate sources of conflict, including land disputes, and promote reconciliation between communities, including through the provision of support to traditional, community-level conflict resolution mechanisms.

19. UNAMID conducted several missions in February to assess the security situation in areas along the border between Southern Darfur and South Sudan. The situation in these areas appeared to be calm. The local population voiced concern over inadequate access to public services, particularly health, education and water. To help mitigate the risk of tensions arising over the limited resources, UNAMID has developed a proposal for the rehabilitation of water reservoirs in these and other parts of Darfur, for which donor funding has now been committed.

Security and safety

20. There was a decrease in the number of attacks on UNAMID peacekeepers, which is attributed to the adoption of a more robust posture by UNAMID military and police and an enhanced cooperation through continued advocacy with the Government and leaders of armed groups.

21. There were, however, two serious incidents in which UNAMID peacekeepers and those assisting humanitarian efforts were targeted. On 22 March, armed assailants fired on a UNAMID team travelling from Masteri, Western Darfur, to a nearby team site, and wounded two UNAMID soldiers. The UNAMID quick reaction force deployed to the scene, apprehended three suspects and handed them over to the Government of the Sudan police, who are investigating the incident.

22. On 5 January, through the intensive efforts of the Government and UNAMID, a UNAMID international civilian staff member, who had been abducted in El Fasher on 7 October, was released unharmed after 90 days in captivity. However, on 13 January, three crew members contracted by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service were abducted by unidentified men shortly after landing at Um Shalaya in Western Darfur. Passengers were unharmed. Efforts to secure the safe release of the crew members are continuing.

23. A total of 10 vehicles were carjacked between January and March 2011, including one belonging to UNAMID, two to United Nations funds and programmes, six to international non-governmental organizations, and one to a local non-governmental organization. The UNAMID vehicle, which was taken from a police patrol by five unidentified armed men at Zam Zam camp on the night of 27 March, was found abandoned near the scene of the incident the following day. UNAMID continued to work closely with humanitarian organizations in implementing measures to help mitigate the risk of carjacking. Almost all humanitarian logistics convoys in Darfur are now conducted with UNAMID armed escort.

Restrictions on movement

24. While UNAMID carried out 10,619 patrols from 1 January to 31 March, the mission's movements by land were impeded on 19 occasions. Of these restrictions, 18 were imposed by Government authorities and one by SLA-Abdul Wahid. The vast majority of restrictions were imposed on UNAMID patrols to areas of ongoing or recently concluded military operations, including Dar al Salam, Khor Abeche, Thabit and Wadi Mura. On at least seven occasions, UNAMID patrols were able to overcome restrictions and successfully accomplish their tasks by insisting that they be allowed to proceed or by using alternate routes. In addition, Sudanese Armed Forces and other Government officials refused 76 flight clearance requests submitted by the mission, again mainly during, and because of, ongoing military operations.

IV. Humanitarian situation

25. The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan reported that more than 70,000 people were displaced during the reporting period, as a result of hostilities between Government and movement forces. While some are newly displaced, the vast majority appeared to be already displaced and living in camps of internally displaced persons. Most were displaced from the areas of Shangil Tobaya, Sortony, Tukumare, Thabit, Wadi Mura, Abu Zerega and Dar al Salam in Northern Darfur, and Khor Abeche and Shaeria in Southern Darfur. Of the estimated 15,000 internally displaced persons who had gathered around UNAMID team sites in Shangil Tobaya, Khor Abeche and Dar al Salam in December to seek protection, approximately 3,500 are continuing to shelter beside the Khor Abeche team site. The remainder have moved to Zam Zam camp in Northern Darfur or camps near Nyala in Southern Darfur.

26. In Zam Zam camp, as at 15 March, the estimated number of internally displaced persons newly arrived in 2011 stood at 61,129. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has completed formal verification of 44,129, while verification of the remainder is ongoing.

27. Since the kidnapping of the Humanitarian Air Service crew members on 13 January, humanitarian access has been temporarily limited for safety reasons to 38 landing sites in Darfur. Measures have been put in place to enhance security at all Humanitarian Air Service landing sites, including through introduction of the mandatory requirement for landing sites to be secured by UNAMID or Government police before aircraft land.

28. UNAMID expanded its access to Jebel Marra. On 5 March, a patrol proceeded to Fanga Suk village (60 km south-west of Tawilla) and met with, among others, commanders of SLA-Abdul Wahid, LJM and JEM. The commanders committed themselves to cooperating with UNAMID to improve access and the delivery of humanitarian aid. On 6 March, UNAMID escorted Government officials to Golo and Guldo villages (25 km north-east of Nertiti) to deliver school examination materials. On 7 March, UNAMID together with representatives of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) departed Nyala for eastern Jebel Marra to assess the security and humanitarian situations. The mission was aborted because of security concerns.

29. On 18 March, the Joint Special Representative visited the Government-controlled village of Jawa and the movement-controlled village of Fanga Suk in Jebel Marra to secure humanitarian access to those areas, which had been inaccessible for several months. As a result, on 23 March, an inter-agency mission comprising representatives of UNAMID, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, WHO, international non-governmental organizations and the Ministry of Health was able to access Fanga Suk to assess the situation and provide humanitarian assistance, which included over 500 kg of relief material, including medication, nutrition supplements, education materials, and vaccines, some of which were administered to children.

30. In other areas, humanitarian organizations continued to face restrictions on their movements. On 14 February, the Wali of Southern Darfur announced the expulsion of Médecins du Monde, alleging its involvement in activities in support of armed movements. Two national staff members of the organization were detained by the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Service in Nyala and, as at 31 March, they remained in custody. Médecins du Monde, a key implementing partner of UNICEF in its child immunization programmes, had been one of the few international non-governmental organizations providing primary health care and nutrition services to approximately 100,000 beneficiaries in clinics in Dera, Gorlambai, Deribat, Fiena and Beliserif in eastern Jebel Marra. The expulsion of Médecins du Monde is being addressed in Khartoum through the joint coordination mechanism of the Government, the United Nations and humanitarian agencies.

31. On 28 February, the Wali of Western Darfur suspended the activities of Catholic Relief Services, a World Food Programme implementing partner, on the grounds that its staff members were operating outside their mandate. On 27 March, at a meeting of the mission's leadership, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, the State Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, the Commissioner-General of the Humanitarian Aid Commission, the Governor of Southern Darfur and the Country Director of Catholic Relief Services, it was agreed that the organization could return immediately to Western Darfur. Following discussions with the authorities concerned, Catholic Relief Services was allowed to resume operations on 29 March.

32. While clashes continue in some parts of Darfur, internally displaced persons are seeking return, resettlement, or integration into host communities in other areas of Darfur. An inter-agency humanitarian assessment conducted from 20 to 22 March found that an estimated 13,000 internally displaced persons had returned to their villages of origin near Kass, Southern Darfur. On 24 February, IOM announced that it was no longer able to fulfil its obligations in regard to returns in Darfur in accordance with the 2004 memorandum of understanding with the Government, owing to the rejection of visas and stay permits for its staff members based in Darfur. Since then, the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies have been working to enhance the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the joint verification mechanism on returns, comprising representatives of the Government, UNAMID and humanitarian agencies, the purpose of which is to determine whether cases of return in Darfur accord with international principles and standards pertaining to the return or resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees.

V. Rule of law, governance and human rights

33. The human rights situation in Darfur remained largely unchanged, with instances of arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention, as well as violations of the right to liberty and security of internally displaced persons, causing particular concern. The Government's recent cordon and search operations at the Shangil Tobaya and Zam Zam camps of the internally displaced (referred to in para. 17) uncovered some evidence of illegal activity, including weapons, ammunition and illicit substances, leading to the arrest of 37 internally displaced persons, who were released after two weeks of detention. During an investigation into the search operation of 23 January at Zam Zam camp, UNAMID received allegations made by community members that internally displaced persons were harassed, physically assaulted, arbitrarily detained, and had their personal belongings confiscated. On 20 March, the Government conducted another operation at Zam Zam camp and 19 internally displaced persons were reportedly detained, of whom 15 were released later that day. The attempts of UNAMID to gain access to the detainees to assess their condition were, in most cases, denied by State Government authorities. Community members subsequently informed UNAMID that all were eventually released without charge. UNAMID continues to engage Government authorities and advocate the cessation of unlawful detention.

34. With a view to enhancing the capacity of UNAMID to address issues at the local level that are related to peace and justice in the Darfur political process and provide support for reconciliation initiatives, the mission established an Advisory Board on Justice, Accountability, Truth and Reconciliation on 27 January. The Board has held introductory meetings throughout February and March with a wide range of stakeholders across Darfur, including local officials, internally displaced persons and civil society leaders. On 21 February, the Board participated in the Darfur Women's Regional Legislative Caucus in El Fasher and from 1 to 5 March held meetings in Khartoum with the Minister of Justice, the Chief Justice of the Sudan, the Special Prosecutor for Darfur, the African Union Ambassador to the Sudan and the Ambassadors to the Sudan of the permanent members of the Security Council. The participants discussed how to integrate the issues of justice, accountability and reconciliation into the ongoing peace process.

35. The number of cases of sexual and gender-based violence recorded across Darfur has remained largely unchanged. A total of 29 cases involving 54 victims were recorded by UNAMID during this reporting period, as compared to 26 cases involving 43 victims during the previous period. As part of capacity-building efforts, UNAMID, Government of the Sudan police and the Government Violence against Women Unit held a joint workshop in Khartoum on 13 and 14 February to develop a training manual for police on investigations into sexual and gender-based violence.

36. On 21 February, UNAMID launched the Darfur Women's Legislative Caucus, the objective of which is to strengthen the role of women in parliament and promote women's and girls' rights. Sixty-four female legislators from the three Darfur States participated in the event in El Fasher. In addition, several advocacy and capacity-building activities were undertaken by the mission, focusing on increasing women's representation in the political process, including through the formation of a women's secretariat that brings together local women's non-governmental organizations with a view to providing a more coordinated, institutional framework for resolving

women's issues. In addition, UNAMID has finalized the development of a comprehensive strategy on sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response. As part of a campaign for International Women's Day, the mission, in cooperation with the Government, organized various activities under the theme "Equal access to education, training, science and technology: the pathway to decent work for women", which included marches, drama, a sensitization campaign about female genital mutilation, a career day for girls about to finish secondary school, skits on girls' education and exhibitions on tertiary institutions.

37. UNAMID continued to assist national rule of law institutions and related stakeholders. It monitored the conduct of three criminal trials, one in Zalingei and two in Nyala, attending a total of nine court sessions. From 8 to 10 February, a juvenile officers workshop, with a particular focus on children's rights, the role of social workers in aftercare programmes, psychological advice and health awareness, was held in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in El Fasher, with the participation of 13 young people. The mission also facilitated a training programme for 20 prison officers on basic prison duties, from 13 to 17 February, which was organized by the Northern Darfur State Prison Administration and funded by UNDP. For the first time Sudanese prison personnel who had previously participated in UNAMID training programmes served as resource persons and facilitators.

38. A number of infrastructure rehabilitation programmes pertaining to prisons and justice were completed. On 7 February, the rehabilitation of prisons in El Daein and Buram, both in Southern Darfur, funded jointly by UNDP and UNAMID through quick-impact projects, was completed.

39. On 3 February, the mission handed over a refurbished resource centre and office equipment to the Bar Association in El Fasher. Pursuant to a memorandum of understanding between the Government and UNAMID signed in February 2010, the mission held consultations with national authorities on the establishment of local prison development committees to provide oversight of the daily management of prisons in Darfur. The first prison development committee is scheduled to be established in Zalingei on 18 April. The mission also provided logistical support to allow the operation of mobile courts, thereby facilitating the reopening of a court in Kabkabiya, Northern Darfur, on 14 February.

Child protection

40. On 8 March, a signed action plan on child protection was transmitted by UNAMID to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, according to which the JEM Peace Wing committed itself to ending recruitment and use of child soldiers, taking measures to prevent the recruitment and the re-recruitment of children and submitting progress reports on the implementation of the action plan. On 22 January, SLA-Free Will and SLA-Mother, both of which signed similar action plans in 2009, jointly registered 84 children recently released from the movements in cooperation with the Northern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. The exercise brought the total number of children released in Darfur since 2009 to 1,041. UNAMID supported the exercise by providing technical advice to the parties. On 11 February, SLA-Free Will submitted a second progress report to UNAMID on the implementation of its action plan, which included an appeal for United Nations

assistance with the reintegration of 40 children and 8 young adults who are former child soldiers; UNAMID is liaising with UNICEF on the request.

VI. Protection of civilians

41. The mission and United Nations programmes and agencies focused on the adoption and implementation of the UNAMID comprehensive protection of civilians strategy, developed in coordination with the United Nations country team pursuant to Security Council resolution 1935 (2010). Regarding implementation of the strategy, UNAMID is providing training to mission components across Darfur, conducting advocacy with the Government and armed movements about the various provisions of the strategy and proceeding with the deployment of civilian staff to UNAMID team sites.

42. During, and in the aftermath of, recent clashes between Government and movement forces, UNAMID provided protection in the form of physical security, water and primary health care to approximately 10,000 internally displaced persons who sought shelter near UNAMID team sites in Khor Abeche and Shangil Tobaya and to civilians in areas affected by clashes. In support of these activities, agencies donated medical supplies to UNAMID clinics. In addition, the mission provided logistical support to aid agencies transporting supplies and armed escorts for humanitarian missions to insecure areas. The number of UNAMID military patrols increased compared to the previous reporting period (see para. 52), and civilian staff were deployed to serve from the team sites at Tawilla, Shangil Tobaya, Saraf Umra and Khor Abeche to enhance monitoring, analysis and responses to protection concerns.

43. UNAMID, together with humanitarian agencies, continued to engage the Government and the movements at all levels to secure the necessary freedom of movement and access to civilians in need of protection and assistance. On 21 March, the Joint Special Representative met with President Omer Al-Bashir in Khartoum, and discussed the possibility of establishing a UNAMID team site in Jebel Marra. This was followed by a meeting the same day with Abdul Wahid, the leader of the Sudan Liberation Movement, whose movement is predominant in the area, who indicated a willingness to consider the matter.

VII. Progress against mission benchmarks

44. Pursuant to paragraph 8 of Security Council resolution 1935 (2010), this report includes an assessment against the benchmarks set out in annex II to the report of the Secretary-General of 16 November 2009 (S/2009/592).

45. Some progress has been made against the first benchmark — the achievement of a comprehensive political solution to the conflict, through the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement or subsequent agreement — in that there is now broad agreement between the Government, LJM and JEM on elements of a comprehensive peace consensus as they pertain to wealth-sharing, compensation and returns, justice and reconciliation, human rights and security arrangements. Efforts will continue to facilitate full and final agreement between the parties on the more contentious matters related to power-sharing, particularly the administrative status of Darfur and

political appointments. In this context, cooperation between JEM and LJM, and between JEM and SLA-Minni Minawi at the political level, has increased, as evidenced by the issuing of a joint coordination charter in the case of JEM and SLA-LJM and a joint political statement by JEM and SLA-Minni Minawi, raising the prospect of a more inclusive peace process. Ultimately, securing the necessary buy-in of the Darfuri people for the implementation of any outcome document agreed to by the parties in Doha is essential. Efforts are ongoing to ensure that their views are fully considered through the processes described in paragraphs 3 to 11.

46. Progress against the second benchmark — the restoration of a stable and secure environment throughout Darfur — has been mixed. No new ceasefires were reached and fighting between Government and movement forces continued to the detriment of the civilian population. The incidence of intercommunal fighting remained low and the financial support received by UNAMID for the implementation of water projects designed to reduce community-based tension offers to go some way towards maintaining the status quo. Relations between the Sudan and Chad remained cordial, and the two countries continued to cooperate through a joint border security force. This had a correspondingly positive effect on security and stability in the region, particularly in Western Darfur, by preventing the movement of armed groups across the border. On 16 March, the mandate of the joint force was extended by six months by the Governments of the Sudan and Chad.

47. The adoption by UNAMID of a more robust posture appears to be reaping some positive dividends in that humanitarian space appears to have the opportunity to expand to Jebel Marra, an area which was previously inaccessible. But the ability of the mission to sustain, let alone build on, recent progress is severely limited, if not undermined, by the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement and its implementation. In this vein, it is notable that while the number of attacks on humanitarian workers and UNAMID peacekeepers has declined, their severity has not.

48. Progress against the third benchmark — the enhancement of the rule of law, governance and human rights protections, and the provision of assistance to effective and efficient State institutions — was limited. The frequency of human rights violations, especially those associated with military conflict and arbitrary searches and detention, remained relatively high. Modest progress was evident in the reduction in recorded incidents of banditry and criminality, perhaps as a result of the mission's adoption of a more robust posture. Somewhat encouraging were the recent commitments by the collaboration between SLA-Free Will and SLA-Mother and the Northern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission to release child soldiers and young adults.

49. The fourth benchmark — stabilizing the humanitarian situation and facilitating humanitarian access to populations in need of assistance — saw neither major advancement nor regression. There were no significant instances of returns. Indeed, the opposite was the case in that large numbers of existing internally displaced persons were displaced once again by fighting. Despite that, and several restrictions on movement, overall progress was made in terms of access: UNAMID and humanitarian workers were able to access most areas affected by fighting, as well as parts of Jebel Marra. The mortality rate remained stable. The expulsion of Médecins du Monde had a negative impact on the provision of humanitarian services to communities. In a positive development in the area of early recovery, the

Government on 7 February pledged $200 million for recovery and development projects in line with its strategy for Darfur.

VIII. Deployment and operations of the mission

50. As at 1 March, the number of UNAMID civilian personnel stood at 4,415, of whom 1,126 are international staff, 2,828 national staff and 461 United Nations Volunteers. This represents 80 per cent of the approved strength of 5,516. The mission continues to face difficulties in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff owing to the harsh living conditions and unpredictable security situation in Darfur. With regard to the deployment of additional international staff, 61 staff members arrived in the mission area, 35 were separated and 20 candidates declined an offer of appointment with the mission.

51. As at 31 March, the strength of UNAMID military personnel stood at 17,912, representing 92 per cent of the authorized strength of 19,555. This includes 17,430 troops, 260 staff officers, 53 liaison officers and 169 military observers. Three additional military units were deployed to the mission (the Royal Thailand Infantry Battalion, the Mongolian Level II Hospital Unit and the Ethiopian Well Drilling Unit). The deployments added 1,005 military personnel to the strength of the mission. The strength of UNAMID police personnel stood at 2,922 (79 per cent men and 21 per cent women), representing 77 per cent of the authorized strength of 3,772. The formed police unit personnel strength stood at 2,229 or 84 per cent of the authorized strength of 2,660.

52. UNAMID military personnel conducted a total of 10,619 patrols, comprising 5,189 routine patrols, 484 humanitarian escorts, 1,774 night patrols, 954 short-range patrols, 685 long-range patrols and 1,533 logistics and administrative patrols. On a daily average 150 military patrols were conducted compared to 90 in the previous reporting period. UNAMID police conducted a total of 11,764 patrols. Of these, 6,957 patrols were conducted within camps of internally displaced persons and with groups of mainly women and children leaving villages and camps to collect firewood and grass; 2,783 were conducted in and around villages and markets; and 2,024 medium- and long-range patrols to improve area security were conducted.

53. Preparations to deploy the second Senegalese infantry battalion are nearly completed. Ethiopia will soon deploy the second multirole logistics unit. Discussions with Nigeria are ongoing to finalize its long-standing pledge for a sector reserve company and a sector reconnaissance company.

54. Five military units, namely two medium transport units, two utility helicopter units and one aerial reconnaissance unit have yet to be pledged to the mission. In this regard, the joint African Union-United Nations military capability study, which was completed on 18 March, recommended the reduction of the requirement for military medium transport units from the total of three to one.

55. The readiness and self-sustainment capabilities of military contingents continued to improve gradually, with contributors deploying additional vehicles. A number of contributing countries have taken steps towards addressing the shortfall of armoured personnel carriers deployed, in some cases with direct bilateral assistance. At present, 7 out of 17 infantry battalions and 6 out of 16 formed police

units have significant equipment shortfalls and serviceability rates below the mandated limit of 90 per cent.

56. On 3 February, the tenth tripartite meeting was held in Addis Ababa. Participants representing the Government of the Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations discussed a range of issues, including the Darfur-based Political Process, freedom of movement for UNAMID personnel, access for radio broadcasts and delays in the issuing of visas, and the Government request that UNAMID deploy Arabic-speaking police officers. It was also agreed that the tripartite arrangements would be restructured, given the need to shift focus from the deployment of UNAMID to the employment of the mission's human and material resources for the effective implementation of its mandate. The tripartite meetings will be held henceforth at technical and strategic levels to review operational and political issues respectively.

57. At the meeting, the Government delegation reaffirmed that it had provisionally decided to support UNAMID to broadcast programmes on the Sudanese radio station Al Salaam for an initial period of three months. UNAMID personnel met with officials of the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Khartoum on 7 February to discuss the modalities of implementing this "bridging solution". At a subsequent meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Radio Sudan on 24 February, the Government agreed to the broadcast proposal presented by UNAMID, which outlines a plan to broadcast programmes on peace and development issues pertaining to the mission mandate. The station selected is available, for approximately 10 hours per day, on FM frequency in Khartoum and short-wave frequency in the remainder of the Sudan, including in Darfur. UNAMID is currently establishing arrangements with the Government to ensure that the mission has editorial control over the content of its broadcasts and is in discussions with State authorities to gain greater access to Darfur radio stations.

58. UNAMID continued to experience considerable delays in the issuing of visas to mission personnel. As at 31 March, 1,237 applications for visas were pending. Of these, 898 were for individual police officers and 157 for military staff officers and observers, the remainder for civilian personnel of various categories. The matter was raised with the Government at the last tripartite meeting and in démarches made by UNAMID to Government officials.

59. The Government has requested UNAMID to increase the number of international personnel with local language skills, in particular those who deal directly with the population, including police and substantive components. UNAMID, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support have been working with the Government to this end. In the meantime, intensive discussions are ongoing towards clearing visas for personnel without local language skills, pending further deployment of those who possess them. At a meeting of the tripartite technical committee held on 31 March, it was agreed that the Government in the meantime would approve all pending visa requests for military personnel and those police and civilian personnel deemed by the mission to be critical for operations.

60. The construction of community police centres continued. Of the 70 centres planned for construction, 12 were completed and 5 others are nearly complete, while the remaining 53 have been prioritized for construction.

61. UNAMID continued its efforts to reduce the threat posed by unexploded ordnance throughout Darfur. It destroyed over 200 ordnance items and delivered risk awareness training to approximately 28,000 civilians. Hazard assessments and the safe disposal of ordnance resulted in the return of 20,000 m² of land to local communities. Some 536 km of previously suspect roads are now safe for transit.

62. The Darfur Security Arrangements Implementation Commission, a subsidiary body of the Transitional Darfur Authority established under the Darfur Peace Agreement, began the voluntary disarmament of some 2,000 members of SLA-Mustafa Terab, a breakaway faction of SLA-Minni Minawi. From 5 to 23 February, the Commission processed a total of 485 SLA-Mustafa Terab members in El Fasher and Nyala. The exercise was observed by UNAMID.

63. Of the 96 sites identified by UNAMID for drilling to access water, 24 are currently in use and the water is being shared with local communities. The arrival of three military well drilling rigs (from Ethiopia and Thailand) has enhanced the drilling capacity of the mission. In addition, a contract to drill 13 more boreholes has been awarded to a national company and drilling is expected to be completed in April. A contract to drill 25 additional boreholes has been awarded to an international company.

64. Since the previous reporting period, 15 quick-impact projects have been completed. A total of 245 projects are 60 per cent complete and 52 projects have recently been commenced. The implementation of quick-impact projects in Darfur remains challenging for a variety of reasons, primarily the low capacity of implementing partners. With a view to addressing some of these challenges, a quick-impact project management and implementation training programme was held for implementing partners and UNAMID military and police personnel.

IX. Observations

65. The reporting period witnessed progress on the political front, both in the peace negotiations in Doha and in regard to the launch of the Darfur-based Political Process. For these efforts to be effective in assisting the Government, armed movements and people of Darfur to reach sustainable peace, they will require the full engagement of the concerned stakeholders and the unified support of the international community.

66. The Chairperson of the African Union, Jean Ping, and I fully support both these efforts, which are not only complementary but essential to long-term peace and stability in Darfur. The Government of the Sudan remains actively engaged in these complementary processes. I call on the Government and the movements to show the flexibility necessary to ensure fruitful negotiations in Darfur towards an early comprehensive agreement.

67. Concern has been raised over the credibility and impartiality of a Darfur-based Political Process in view of the situation on the ground and the history of the conflict. I commend the Government for its recent indication that it will lift the state of emergency that has been in place in Darfur since 1997. This is essential for ensuring the political and civil rights necessary for the people of Darfur to freely engage in the Darfur-based Political Process and to find means to address the issues essential to sustainable peace. I call on the Government to work with UNAMID

towards the full implementation of these measures. I also call on the armed movements to provide their full cooperation and participation in this process.

68. Since my last report to the Council on the situation in Darfur, fighting between the Government and armed movements, particularly between the Sudanese Armed Forces and forces of SLA-Minni Minawi and JEM, has widened to include elements of SLA-Abdul Wahid and LJM. These clashes undermine the work of the peace negotiations and the Darfur-based Political Process and pose humanitarian challenges in Darfur. Offensive military operations — whether conducted by Government or movement forces — undermine the population's trust and confidence in those that conduct them and undermine efforts to promote early recovery and voluntary return. I call again upon the Government and all armed movements to cease hostilities and enter into ceasefire negotiations immediately.

69. The relatively few instances of intercommunal fighting that have occurred in Darfur in recent months are attributed in part to commendable work on the part of the Government of the Sudan in promoting inter-tribal reconciliation, as well as the constructive actions of communities themselves and the support provided by UNAMID to traditional, community-level conflict resolution mechanisms. I encourage the Government to continue its efforts to decrease inter-tribal conflict, including by implementing early recovery and development projects that reduce resource-based conflict between communities. In this regard, the Government is encouraged to urgently begin disbursing the $1.9 billion development assistance that it committed to Darfur last year. The implementation of visible, appropriate and conflict-sensitive development projects that benefit communities in Darfur can help to restore communities' trust and confidence in the Government, thereby enhancing prospects for peace, stability, recovery and the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes.

70. At the same time, I remain deeply concerned about the risks the security situation in Darfur continues to pose for the work of United Nations and other personnel. I am pleased to report the release of a UNAMID civilian staff member who was abducted in El Fasher in October 2010, and thank the Government of the Sudan for its efforts to secure his safe release. I condemn in the strongest possible terms those responsible for the kidnapping of the three aviation staff contracted to the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service who remain in captivity. We are working closely with the Government to secure their safe release, bring those responsible to justice and ensure that such incidents are not repeated. The abduction of international staff in Darfur severely limits the ability of humanitarian and recovery workers to undertake their activities in support of the Government and people of Darfur.

71. The continued attacks on the UNAMID peacekeepers are reprehensible. In the aftermath of the attack by armed assailants on 22 March on a UNAMID patrol in Western Darfur, in which two peacekeepers were wounded, the performance of the mission's quick reaction force in apprehending three armed suspects was commendable, and I fully expect the Government to bring the perpetrators to justice.

72. I welcome the reduction in restrictions on movement that is a result of the mission adopting a more robust posture, as well as the improved access to Jebel Marra, but remain concerned about the frequency with which belligerent parties seek to restrict the operations of UNAMID and humanitarian agencies. Most restrictions have been imposed on UNAMID when the mission has endeavoured to

access areas of ongoing or recently concluded fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and movement forces. UNAMID is mandated to protect civilians and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The people most in need of this assistance are normally those affected by fighting between the armed forces and the armed movements. I strongly urge the Government to ensure the fulfilment of its obligations under the status-of-forces agreement and to allow UNAMID and humanitarian workers unhindered access to all parts of Darfur, including areas of recent fighting.

73. I am deeply concerned about the considerable delays being experienced by UNAMID in the issuing of visas to mission personnel, which are adversely affecting recruitment and threatening to hamper mission operations. This is in violation of the status-of-forces agreement. While UNAMID and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations continue to work on deploying additional personnel with local language skills, I call upon the Government to immediately process the backlog of visas so that the mission is able to carry out its mandated tasks.

74. The next several months will be a crucial period for the future of Darfur and the Sudan. With the end of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement interim period approaching, the positive engagement of the Government, movements and all stakeholders in constructive dialogue will be more important than ever. For its part, the international community must maintain its unified and constructive engagement with all stakeholders in assisting them to take the difficult decisions necessary to abandon military options and work actively towards a sustainable and peaceful resolution of the conflict. All must do their part to end the suffering of those most affected by war and to create the conditions for them to return to their homes and live free and productive lives.

75. In closing, I would like to thank my Joint Special Representative for his continuing leadership and all the women and men of UNAMID and the humanitarian community for their tireless efforts to bring peace and stability to Darfur. I would also like to thank the African Union, my Joint Chief Mediator, the Government of Qatar, and President Mbeki, as the Chair of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, for their untiring efforts in bringing peace to Darfur.